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U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Willamette Valley National Wildlife
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News Release



Date: October 24, 2014

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ANNUAL WINTER SANCTUARY SEASON ANNOUNCED FOR LOCAL NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES

Public access into major portions of the Willamette Valley National Wildlife Refuges will be limited during the winter sanctuary season in order to provide undisturbed habitat for Canada geese and other wildlife. By resting in undisturbed areas on the Refuge, often referred to as sanctuary, wintering geese replenish their energy reserves required for nesting and migrating. This sanctuary also reduces crop damage on neighboring agricultural lands.

The winter sanctuary for **Baskett Slough National Wildlife Refuge** went into effect on October 1 and will remain in effect until March 31. Visiting hours are sunrise to sunset. To locate Baskett Slough National Wildlife Refuge, visitors should travel west on State Highway 22 from Salem and watch for the wildlife viewing area signs, which are located on the north side of the highway at mile post 14.

A wildlife viewing kiosk is located adjacent to State Highway 22. This facility offers visitors excellent wildlife viewing opportunities and is complete with interpretive panels, a viewing scope, benches, and picnic tables. The kiosk is fully accessible and is open year-round from sunrise to sunset.

Hiking on Baskett Slough during the sanctuary season is limited to the Rich Guadagno Memorial Trail and Baskett Butte Loop. Both are popular hikes and offer panoramic views of the Willamette Valley. Look for various raptor species cruising over the fields below the Butte. Restroom and kiosk facilities are located at the trailhead off Coville Road.

The majority of **Ankeny National Wildlife Refuge** also entered its sanctuary season on October 1. Visitors may access open areas on the Refuge from sunrise to sunset. Access may be found by traveling 10 miles north from Albany or 12 miles south from Salem on Interstate 5. Take exit 243, Ankeny Hill Road, and drive 1/4 mile west to an intersection. Refuge trails and overlooks may be found along Buena Vista Road, Ankeny Hill Road, and Wintel Road. Watch for the brown Wildlife Viewing Area signs.

A wildlife viewing kiosk is located adjacent to Buena Vista Road at Eagle Marsh Overlook. This facility offers visitors excellent wildlife viewing opportunities overlooking a large wetland area where bald eagles are frequently seen.

Rail Trail hiking path and boardwalk passes through oak and maple woods and an Oregon ash dominated forested wetland. A 2,500 foot boardwalk and wildlife observation blind are included in the first section of the

trail. This section travels through the wooded wetland and provides a great opportunity to enjoy nature in an intimate setting. The hike is well worth the time and effort for those interested in viewing a variety of habitats, plant and animal life. Another viewing blind and boardwalk are available on the north side of Wintel Road just west of the Rail Trail parking area. This short boardwalk parallels Bashaw Creek, ending at the viewing blind which overlooks Pintail Marsh.

On November 1, **William L. Finley National Wildlife Refuge** will enter into its winter sanctuary season. Visiting hours are from sunrise to sunset. This 5,325 acre refuge is located approximately 9 miles south of Corvallis off State Highway 99W. Brown Refuge signs are visible prior to the turn onto Finley Refuge Road.

A variety of activities await visitors, including driving the auto tour route or hiking several miles of trails. Several habitat types provide opportunities to view wildlife like Roosevelt elk, bobcats, and numerous species of birds, as well as plants native to the Willamette Valley. Cabell Marsh is another popular area for wildlife watching and is easily accessible from the Homer Campbell Memorial Boardwalk. From the observation blind at the end, hikers may observe thousands of geese and ducks that use Cabell Marsh as a roost site or perhaps glimpse an osprey perched in a snag. Year-round trails include Woodpecker Loop, Mill Hill Trail, Inter-tie Trail, Homer Campbell Boardwalk, Cabell Marsh Overlook, and McFadden Marsh Trail. History enthusiasts will find William L. Finley National Wildlife Refuge of special interest as historical homes and barns can be found at various locations on the Refuge.

Visitors to Finley NWR may also find friendly faces to answer questions and provide directions on the weekends. Volunteers at the Wild Goose Nature Store, located within the Refuge headquarter building, are available Friday through Sunday from 10am to 4pm. Stop by to pick up brochures, take a break, browse the Store, or just say “hi”.

The **Snag Boat Bend Unit**, located off Peoria Road, is open year-round. A peaceful trail leading to an observation blind overlooking the Willamette River backwaters provides opportunities for visitors to enjoy nature throughout the year. Songbirds, raptors and waterfowl may be heard or seen along the trail.

The three Willamette Valley Refuges were created in the mid 1960's to provide habitat for the dusky Canada goose and to preserve and restore vanishing native habitats for a host of other wildlife and plant species. The Refuges support a diverse assemblage of rare, threatened, and endangered species of plants and animals. Each Refuge is intensively managed to meet the needs of many species, especially those confined to small or limited ranges. These Refuges offer the public a unique opportunity to view Oregon's natural heritage up close. An overall management goal of the Willamette Valley Refuges is to provide high quality opportunities for wildlife-dependent recreation and environmental education.

Visitors should remember Refuges are not zoos; wildlife roam free in their natural habitats, so expect to see the wonder of nature in all its glory! If you are not familiar with local wildlife, enhance your experience by bringing along a field guides, binoculars and a canteen of water.

For more information please contact the Willamette Valley National Wildlife Refuge Complex Headquarters at (541) 757-7236. Office hours are Monday thru Friday 8:00am - 4:00pm.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov--